United Nations A/C.1/60/PV.8

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

First Committee
8th meeting
Monday, 10 October 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Choi ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Natural disasters in South Asia and in Central America

The Chairman: On behalf of the First Committee, I would like to extend my most heartfelt condolences to the victims of the earthquake that occurred in South Asia over the weekend. I was horrified when I received the tragic news of the overwhelming disaster, and I am extremely shocked by the scale of casualties, particularly the tremendous loss of life in Pakistan. I earnestly hope that rescue operations will get to work in high gear to prevent further victims and to save lives and property in the affected region. I am confident that international solidarity and sympathy will be shown with the peoples and the Governments of the region.

I would also like to extend my deepest sympathy to the peoples and the Governments of Central America suffering from the passage of a hurricane just last week. Our deepest condolences go to the victims and their families in the region, particularly in Guatemala, where the death toll is the highest. It is my earnest wish that the international community will spare no effort to assist that region to make the earliest possible recovery.

Agenda items 85 to 105 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: In accordance with the programme of work and timetable, today the Committee will begin the second phase of its work, thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items.

In accordance with the decisions on the rationalization of the work of the First Committee, this stage of the Committee's work will combine the discussion of specific subjects with the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and draft decisions. As delegations will recall, document A/C.1/60/CRP.2, containing the timetable and subjects for the thematic discussions, was circulated and agreed upon last week.

As previously explained, the formal meetings during this second phase will each be divided into three segments so that the Committee can fully utilize the time allocated to it by engaging in productive discussions, and by introducing all draft resolutions in an efficient and timely manner. The first segment of some meetings will start with a guest speaker, as indicated in document A/C.1/60/CRP.2. After the

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speaker makes his or her opening statement, I will briefly suspend the formal meeting so that we can have an informal question and answer session with that guest speaker. Afterwards, we shall immediately resume the formal meeting and proceed to the second segment, which will consist of interventions by delegations on the subject under consideration. The last segment will be for the introduction of draft resolutions.

Furthermore, as I have already mentioned, there will be no formal list of speakers for this second stage of our work. However, delegations are welcome to inform the Secretariat of their plans to speak prior to the specific meetings. Otherwise, requests for all interventions will be taken directly from the floor on the given day.

Before proceeding with our work, I see that we have been joined today by our junior colleagues from the Disarmament Fellowship Programme. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to extend a warm welcome to them.

We shall now begin our thematic discussion on the issue of nuclear weapons. Since we do not have a guest speaker today, I will give the floor to delegations wishing to make interventions on this specific subject under consideration.

Mr. Freeman (United Kingdom): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and all the other countries that have aligned themselves with this statement.

I would like to start by joining the Chairman, on behalf of the European Union, in extending our deepest sympathy to all who have been affected in the tragic earthquake in Pakistan and in the flooding in Guatemala over the weekend. Furthermore, I hope that our colleagues the representatives of Pakistan and Guatemala will convey this message to their authorities.

The absence of any reference to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in the summit outcome document (resolution 60/1), the disappointing results of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, reflect a regrettable lack of convergency in analysing the challenges we are facing and the way they can be solved.

In our general statement, at the 2nd meeting, the European Union expressed our considerable disappointment at the lack of non-proliferation and disarmament language in the summit outcome document. However, we reiterated our support for a universal non-proliferation regime supported by a strong system of international safeguards and the NPT. The EU believes the prevention of nuclear proliferation and the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with article VI of the NPT are essential for global peace and security.

The NPT is the cornerstone of this regime, based on three mutually reinforcing pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We believe it is as important today as it was when first agreed upon 35 years ago. The European Union will continue to preserve the integrity of the NPT by promoting all the objectives laid down in the Treaty in a structured and balanced manner, as identified and recorded in the European Union's Common Position that we adopted prior to the Review Conference, on 25 April this year.

We regret that this year's NPT Review Conference was unable to agree on a substantive final document to address the most pressing challenges to the Treaty. We see this as a missed opportunity. But the Conference did provide an opportunity to discuss practical ways to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to promote the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and other matters that we wish to see taken forward. Our conviction, as expressed in the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), is that a multilateral approach to non-proliferation provides the best means of countering this threat to international security.

The European Union continues to support the decisions and the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and will bear in mind the current situation. We note also that the final report of the 2005 Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2005/57), which includes the programme of work adopted by consensus at the Conference, constitutes a reference for the future review process, in which the Union will engage on the basis of our Common Position. We also continue to work towards universal accession to the NPT and call on the 11 States not yet party to the NPT to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

I would take this opportunity to reaffirm comments made by the EU presidency in New York on 27 May that to contribute to a better operation of the NPT we should consider holding the first meeting of the preparatory committee for the next conference, in 2007, in Vienna.

The EU believes that the international safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is essential to the verification of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and to the success of this multilateral system. The EU considers that comprehensive safeguards agreements together with additional protocols constitute the current IAEA verification standard. We believe that these are the essential means for States parties to demonstrate that they are fulfilling their obligations under article III of the NPT. EU member States are also working towards making the additional protocol a condition of supply for nuclear exports.

Nuclear enrichment and reprocessing technologies are once again the subject of particular attention from the international community because of their dual-use nature. The EU believes it is important to encourage guarantees of access to nuclear-fuel-related services or to the fuel itself, under appropriate conditions. In this connection, the Union notes the Report of the IAEA Experts Group on multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, published by the IAEA secretariat in February, and the need to start discussing it in the IAEA as soon as possible.

The European Union supports the suspension of nuclear cooperation with a State when the IAEA is unable to give sufficient assurances that that State's nuclear programme is intended exclusively for peaceful purposes. The suspension should continue until the Agency is able to provide those assurances. We also call for a strengthening of the role of the Security Council, as final arbiter of international peace and security, in order that it can take appropriate action in the event of non-compliance with NPT obligations.

As we outlined in our general statement, the Iranian nuclear programme continues to be a matter of grave concern for the European Union. The Union strongly supports the efforts of France, Germany and the United Kingdom, in association with the European Union's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, to find an acceptable agreement to rebuild international confidence in Iran's intentions. We recognize the inalienable right of NPT parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination and in conformity with articles I and II of the NPT. However, maintaining the balance between rights and obligations envisaged in the Treaty is essential. We believe it is incumbent on a non-compliant State to return to full compliance and to build the necessary confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear activities — in the specific case of Iran, through the suspension of fissile material production and enrichment-related activities. The resolution adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors on 24 September finding Iran non-compliant with its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty but deferring the report to the Security Council gives Iran an opportunity now to address the clear concerns of the international community.

The European side, for its part, is prepared to resume negotiations within the framework agreed upon between the Europeans and Iran last November. It is only when Iran demonstrates beyond any doubt that it is not seeking a nuclear weapons capability that it will be able to develop a better relationship with Europe and with the international community as a whole.

Again, as outlined in our general statement, the Union welcomes the joint statement by the participants in the six-party talks on 19 September and recognizes the hard work, flexibility and cooperation shown by participants. We note in particular the renewal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's commitment to abandon nuclear weapons and all existing nuclear programmes and its undertaking to return to the NPT. However, the EU considers the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear weapons programmes to be a serious violation of its commitments under the NPT, its International Atomic Energy Agency Safeguards Agreement, the Agreed Framework between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Joint North-South Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We continue to deplore the stated intention of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to withdraw from the NPT and urge the adoption of measures to deal with withdrawal from the Treaty. We look forward to early implementation of those commitments and to the establishment of effective verification arrangements. The EU has supported the

six-party talks throughout and remains ready to assist in whatever way we can.

At the NPT Review Conference earlier this year we highlighted the possible implications of a withdrawal from the NPT for international peace and security. We believe that measures to discourage withdrawals from the Treaty are urgently needed and should be adopted in the NPT context.

The European Union believes that we must do everything possible to prevent possible access by terrorists to nuclear weapons or materials that could be used in radiological devices. The illicit trade related to WMDs, in particular in highly sensitive nuclear equipment and technology, is of serious concern.

We must be united in a common endeavour to strengthen the non-proliferation regime by closing existing loopholes. The Union is committed to strong national and internationally coordinated export controls to complement our obligations under the NPT. The EU supports the strengthening of the Nuclear Suppliers Group guidelines, and urges the Group and the Zangger Committee to share their experience to expand controls to meet new non-proliferation challenges.

Security Council resolution 1540 clearly places a crucial role in developing an effective mechanism of prevention and counter-proliferation of WMDs and their means of production and delivery by or to State actors and non-State actors worldwide. The resolution calls, inter alia, upon all States to co-ordinate with their national legal authorities and legislation and consistent with international law, as may appropriate, action to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials. We urge States to promote this cause with. The EU is willing to offer its assistance in implementing the provisions of the resolution. We are ready to provide assistance in building legal and administrative infrastructure, sharing our experience of implementation and training respective national authorities.

The EU supports and encourages States to participate in the Proliferation Security Initiative, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials and the Global Threat Reduction Initiative. We particularly encourage early ratification of the amendments to the Convention on Physical Protection agreed upon the diplomatic conference that took place in Vienna in July. We emphasize the importance of the security of nuclear materials and installations and call on all States to ensure that effective arrangements for protection are in place.

In our general statement we set out our continued support for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and welcomed the reduction of strategic and operationally nuclear weapons and their delivery systems since the end of the cold war. We stress the need for an overall reduction of the global stockpile of nuclear weapons in accordance with Article VI of the NPT, in particular by those with the largest arsenals. In this context we encourage the application of the principle of irreversibility to guide all measures in the field of nuclear disarmament and arms control as a contribution to the maintenance of international peace, security and stability, taking these conditions into account. We are actively efforts to secure transparency as a confidence-building measure.

The ongoing stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament is a matter of increasing concern. We are convinced that the new impetus be found and security issues that are mandated by consensus. The EU is strongly committed to ensuring a commencement of work in the Conference and welcomes the fact that new ideas have been put forward over the past few years. We appreciate those efforts aimed at promoting consensus on a programme of work. We support the efforts of the presidency in this connection to that end.

The EU attaches special importance to the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for weapons purposes or as a means to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We call upon for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of a non-discriminatory, universally applicable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in accordance with the mandate contained in the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein.

Pending entry into force of the said treaty, the EU calls on all States to declare and uphold a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The EU welcomes the action of those of the five nuclear-weapon States that have declared this moratorium.

We recognize the importance, from the point of view of nuclear disarmament, of the programmes for the destruction and elimination of nuclear weapons and the elimination of fissile material as defined under the Group of Eight (G-8) Global Partnership.

The European Union believes that entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as soon as possible is a further essential part of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We call on all States, particularly those listed in annex 2 of the Treaty, to sign and ratify this Treaty without delay and without preconditions. Pending its entry into force, we call on all States to abide by a moratorium and to refrain from any action contrary to the obligations and provisions of the CTBT. We highlight the importance of the work of the CTBT Organization Preparatory Commission, and we actively support the work of the Special Representative of the States that have ratified the Treaty in his work promoting universal accession.

The CTBT requires a fully functioning verification regime by entry into force, to provide assurance that all States are complying with their Treaty obligations. The European Union is, therefore, particularly encouraged by the good progress made in establishing the International Monitoring System. The System is unprecedented in its technological scope and global coverage. Its detection capabilities already represent a significant deterrent to any would-be testers of nuclear weapons. Development of on-site inspections, which are an essential part of the verification regime, also continues to make progress.

While we emphasize that the primary purpose of the verification system of the CTBT is to verify compliance with the Treaty, we also support the continuing development of civil and scientific benefits of the system. If data from the verification technologies can mitigate the humanitarian consequences of certain natural disasters and save lives — and we have seen instances of that very recently indeed — we have a moral responsibility to make them available to disaster warning organizations. Furthermore, we believe that exploiting the important additional scientific knowledge offered by the verification system will encourage States to access these further benefits by signing and ratifying the Treaty.

We urge the international community to work for the resolution of regional instability and insecurity and of conflict situations that are often at the root of all armament programmes, including the development of nuclear weapons programmes. The Union continues to attach great importance to the development of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones based on arrangements freely arrived at between the States of the region concerned, to foster regional peace and security and to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, stability and confidence. We welcome ratification by the nuclear weapon States of relevant protocols following the necessary consultations. The EU recognizes the ongoing value of the existing security guarantees that are legally binding and made in the context of such protocols. We hope outstanding issues concerning nuclear weapon-free zones can be resolved, through full consultation, in accordance with United Nations guidelines and with the agreement of all parties involved.

The EU also underlines the importance of controls on all weapons of mass destruction, both nuclear and other, and their means of delivery, encouraged in Security Council resolution 687 (1991). We call upon all States in the Middle East to establish an effectively verifiable zone free of nuclear weapons, as well as of other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

I should, before closing my remarks, use this opportunity to extend congratulations to the International Atomic Energy Agency and to its Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, on the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize. The award is a tribute to the significance attached to the work of the IAEA.

Mr. Zhang Yan (China) (spoke in Chinese): At the outset, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, I would like to express our condolences to the South Asian States of Pakistan, India and Afghanistan on the suffering they are enduring in the aftermath of the earthquake that occurred last weekend.

The end of the cold war and a new security situation have made it possible for us to achieve a substantial reduction in nuclear weapons and to aspire to the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of such weapons. Moving the nuclear disarmament process ahead, and constantly reducing the role of nuclear weapons in international political affairs and national security policies, are two items of great significance for improving the international security environment and promoting the nuclear non-

proliferation process. In that respect, nuclear weapon States bear special and primary responsibilities. It is unacceptable to hold onto a cold war mentality, advocate a pre-emptive strategy, list other countries as targets for nuclear strike, lower the threshold for using nuclear weapons or develop new types of nuclear weapons for specific purposes.

It is regrettable that the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to achieve substantial results. However, as the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, the NPT will continue to play an indispensable role in preventing the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, reducing the threat of nuclear weapons and maintaining global peace and security.

China will sincerely, faithfully implement all its obligations under the NPT and commits itself to enhancing the universality, effectiveness and authority of the Treaty and to promoting, in a comprehensive and balanced manner, the three goals of the NPT: nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We will continue to take an active and constructive part in the NPT review process.

As a nuclear weapon State, China has never ceased to fulfil its responsibilities and obligations in nuclear disarmament. China has always stood for the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons. Since the very day it came into possession of nuclear weapons, China has undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or in any circumstances and has undertaken unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States or nuclear weapon-free zones.

China has always honoured this commitment. In a period during the cold war era, when we were faced with the nuclear threat or nuclear blackmail, or in the post-cold war period, when we witnessed dramatic changes in the international security situation, China's policy in this respect will remain unchanged in the future.

China maintains that the following measures should be taken to further promote the nuclear disarmament process. An international legal instrument on the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons should be concluded at an early date.

Nuclear disarmament should follow a just and reasonable process of gradual reduction towards a downward balance. The two States possessing the largest nuclear arsenals bear special and primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament. They should earnestly comply with the nuclear non-proliferation treaties already concluded and should further reduce their nuclear arsenals in a verifiable and irreversible manner, so as to create conditions for achieving the ultimate goal of complete and thorough nuclear disarmament.

Until the goal of the complete, prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons is achieved, nuclear-weapon States should commit themselves not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and should undertake unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States or nuclear weapon-free zones.

Nuclear-weapon States should abandon the policy of nuclear deterrence based on first use of nuclear weapons and should reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security.

Nuclear disarmament measures, including interim measures, should follow the guidelines of maintaining a global strategic balance and stability and undiminished security for all.

The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should reach agreement on its programme of work at an early date, enabling it to establish ad hoc committees on nuclear disarmament, negative assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, a fissile material cut-off treaty and prevention of an arms race in outer space, and to start substantive work on these issues.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including nuclear weapons, and their means of delivery poses a great threat to international peace and security. Preventing WMD proliferation is a pressing task facing the international community. The ultimate goal of non-proliferation efforts is to maintain international and regional peace, security and stability. In order to prevent WMD proliferation, an integrated approach should be adopted to address both its symptoms and its root causes. In this regard, we would like to make the following points.

Force should be avoided in settling international disputes and regional security

with their obligations and commitments under the NPT. Nuclear-weapon States should take seriously the commitments made to date by nearly all countries to renounce the option of nuclear armament under the NPT regime, recalling the decisions and resolutions of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and the Final Documents of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which demonstrate the readiness of States parties to fulfil their pledges regarding nuclear disarmament.

The efforts of nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals should be duly appreciated. Japan highly values the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, which should serve as a step for further reductions in the number of Russian and United States strategic nuclear warheads. Japan encourages the Russian Federation and the United States to work towards the Treaty's full implementation and to consider building on the Treaty to realize further reductions by negotiating a new framework for the future, not an end in itself.

Japan also calls upon all nuclear-weapon States to take further steps leading to nuclear disarmament, including deeper reductions in all types of nuclear weapons, and calls on all States not to act in any way that could lower the nuclear threshold in this regard. Japan emphasizes the importance of applying the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in the process of working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The danger of undermining the NPT regime also exists outside the framework. States remaining outside the NPT that are developing or are suspected of developing nuclear weapons risk sending an erroneous message to NPT States parties suggesting there are benefits to remaining outside the Treaty. Those States that are parties to the NPT should bear in mind their principal responsibility as members of the international community to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Japan joins other States parties in continuing to call upon States not parties to the NPT to accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States without delay and without conditions and, pending their accession, to refrain from acts that would defeat the object and purpose of the NPT and to implement practical measures towards disarmament and non-proliferation.

Japan welcomes the fact that at the fourth round of the six-party talks an agreement was reached on a joint statement indicating the final goal to be achieved by the talks. Japan highly appreciates the efforts made by the countries concerned, in particular China, as coordinator. The peaceful resolution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear issue is an urgent security matter for Japan. That country's commitment, for the first time, to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a verifiable manner will provide important groundwork for achieving the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula through the six-party talks in the future. Japan takes serious note of the decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We consider it important for the six parties to implement the agreement promptly and steadily, and believe that constructive dialogue should be promoted to that end. Although difficulties may lie ahead before the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is achieved, Japan intends to do its utmost to realize the common goal of achieving peace and stability in North-East Asia by maintaining close cooperation with the countries concerned.

On 24 September, the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) adopted a resolution finding Iran in non-compliance with the IAEA Safeguards Agreement, and urged it to further cooperate with the IAEA, as well as to re-establish the suspension of its uranium-enrichment-related and reprocessing activities. The adoption of that resolution sent a clear message from the international community to Iran, and Japan values it as an important step towards resolving the issue through negotiations. Japan strongly urges Iran to respond to the resolution by sincerely implementing the requirements of all relevant IAEA reports, including the suspension of all its uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities without exception, including uranium conversion activities, and calls on Iran to return to the negotiation process with the three European Union parties.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an important issue because the attitude of the nuclear-weapon States affects the reliability of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The early entry into force of the CTBT continues to be at the top of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. We welcome the Final Declaration of the Fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Treaty, convened here in New York last month, which calls upon all States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the

Treaty without delay. We sincerely hope that, in particular, the remaining 11 Annex 2 countries will heed the call of the international community and become Treaty ratifiers. We continue to support the steady reinforcement of the CTBT verification regime in order to maintain momentum for the Treaty's entry into force. A moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions should be maintained pending the entry into force of the Treaty.

The immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and the early conclusion of such a treaty was agreed to in 1995 and 2000. The treaty would be an essential building block towards the total elimination of nuclear arsenals and would also contribute to the prevention of nuclear proliferation by globally banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and by enhancing transparency and accountability in the management of such materials through its verification system.

Japan welcomes the fact that the United States made clear in its statement last week here in the First Committee its intention to support the early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Japan believes that the verification of such a treaty is necessary and feasible. However, our priority is to start negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament without preconditions, rather than prolonging discussions on the mandate. We should not prejudge the outcome of the negotiations. Japan calls upon all nuclear-weapon States and States not party to the NPT to declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons pending the entry into force of the Treaty.

Japan congratulates the IAEA and its Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, on the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize. Today, the world recognizes that the threat of proliferation and the importance of the role of the IAEA in that field have never been greater. Japan intends to continue to support the IAEA's activities so that it can accomplish its important mission as the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Japan believes that achieving universal adherence to IAEA additional protocols is the most realistic and effective means of enhancing the nuclear non-proliferation regime, as it can ensure that there is no undeclared nuclear material or activities in States. While noting the increasing number of countries which have signed or ratified such protocols, Japan calls on all States that have not yet signed and ratified one to do so. In this regard, the capability of the IAEA in terms of its safeguards activities must be enhanced.

Finally, I would like to introduce a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament, which is being submitted to the First Committee by Japan. Inspired by strong national sentiment calling for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, Japan, as the only nation in the world to have suffered atomic bombings, has annually since 1994 submitted draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament, which have enjoyed overwhelming support from the international community. On the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the atomic bombings, as well as of the establishment of the United Nations, we have decided to revise and resubmit our previous draft resolutions so as to create a concise and strong draft resolution. The international community must overcome the lack of consensus that was apparent in this year's NPT Review Conference and General Assembly sessions. To that end, Japan hopes that all countries, including the nuclear-weapon States, regardless of any differences in position, will unite and support our draft resolution with a view to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Lastly, I would like to express my deep condolences to the families of the victims of the earthquake that took place at the weekend in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): I would like, through you, Mr. Chairman, to express our heartfelt condolences to the delegations of Pakistan and of India on the tragedy that has befallen their peoples in connection with the earthquakes that have taken so many lives and caused so much damage to property. I also extend condolences to the delegation of Guatemala in connection with the losses sustained in the country as a result of the floods.

We are discussing the issue of nuclear weapons today against the backdrop of the successive failures over the past couple of years, and particularly in 2005. It is generally believed — and there is a modicum of truth in it — that success in nuclear disarmament does not hinge on technical issues, but is a matter of political will. We therefore need stronger political will and more innovative thinking in order to move forward on that score.

The failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a matter of great concern for all of us. We have missed out on a great opportunity to chart our future course of action to save the world from the scourge of the continued existence and the possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. That should not have happened.

However, we believe that our disagreements during Review Conference have not in any way weakened our achievements in 1995 and 2000. Those decisions were adopted by consensus. We cannot now simply walk away from those commitments and obligations. We must implement what we have agreed upon, particularly the 13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive implementation of article VI of the NPT. These 13 steps continue to be the performance benchmark for the disarmament process.

It is a matter of great concern for us that deliberations in the Conference on Disarmament — the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations — have been stalled for years on end. We therefore once again call for the Conference to resume its substantive work in line with the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

We need to strengthen our efforts to address both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We can do so through the resumption in the Conference on Disarmament of negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

We also need to agree on the agenda of the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission as soon as possible.

It has been a decade since we adopted the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), banning nuclear explosions in any environment. It is a matter of deep regret that the Treaty has yet to enter into force. We call upon the remaining 11 annex 2 States, whose ratification is essential for that purpose, to adhere to the Treaty as soon as possible. The entry into force of the CTBT would be the most powerful step towards achieving our desired goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We participated in the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) held recently in New York to express our continued support for the work towards the universalization of the CTBT.

We are convinced that that nuclear weapon States have made little progress in eliminating their nuclear arsenals to lead to nuclear disarmament. The destruction of some old nuclear warheads has been overshadowed by the upgrading of remaining warheads with more precision in targeting. There are efforts as well to develop new types of nuclear weapons. These developments will buttress war-fighting capabilities and enhance the propensity for use. That will be extremely destabilizing. In addition, if the possession of nuclear weapons appears to strengthen the sense of security, their acquisition will become attractive. If some have them and appear to benefit, others will want them also. That is simple logic but incontrovertible nonetheless.

We therefore call upon the nuclear-weapon States to take concrete steps to reduce their nuclear arsenals as well as to refrain from developing new types of nuclear weapons. They should act in accordance with their commitment to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, the use of such weaponry in their security policies.

Bangladesh has consistently and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. Bangladesh is the first among 2 nations in South Asia to have ratified the CTBT. We are also a party to the NPT. We have concluded safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency, including an additional protocols.

We believe that regional disarmament arrangements can play a significant role in global nuclear disarmament. We welcome all existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and call for the establishment of similar zones in South Asia, in the Middle East and in other parts of the world.

The greatest threat to humankind comes from the continued existence of nuclear weapons. It is our conviction that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their possible use or threat of use. It is from that viewpoint that we underline the categorical imperative of the

principles of irreversibility and transparency for all nuclear disarmament measures and the need to develop further adequate and efficient verification capabilities. Moreover, there can be no greater peril to the world than cheating on nuclear issues. That is an irrefutable axiom on which there can be no debate.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and through you all the delegations that have formally or informally conveyed their sentiments of sympathy and support for the victims of the earthquake that struck Pakistan, other parts of South Asia and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, Pakistan was hit the hardest. Right now, as I speak, rescue and relief operations are continuing at full speed. The national machinery has been fully harnessed into that effort. International humanitarian assistance has been timely and swift. We are touched by the spontaneous and sincere outpouring on behalf of the people of Pakistan. We would like to convey our profound gratitude to all Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations for their help and assistance.

The loss of life in Pakistan has been massive. Whole villages and townships are heaps of rubble. Infrastructure has been damaged and disrupted over vast, and now inaccessible, territories. Even as we grapple with the immediate relief operations, we are preparing ourselves for rehabilitation and reconstruction. We will appreciate the international community's continued solidarity with us as we move into that difficult phase.

I turn now to the subject of our thematic debate. By now we are familiar with the malady. What we need is the correct prescription. The question before us is how to rectify the situation. One way is to indulge in a subtle, or not so subtle, blame game. The other way is to look at existing and emerging threats and issues relating to disarmament and non-proliferation and to try to understand their correlation in an objective setting. Let us try to assess if a new security architecture is emerging that is supported by a new infrastructure. What are its implications for the core objectives of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy?

We must start from reality. The global security architecture is undergoing profound change. The consensus dating back to the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which seemed to be developing in the post-cold-war period, is not holding well. The existing consensus has been characterized as a relic of the past. There are varying approaches and perspectives on dealing with disarmament and non-proliferation. The consensus underpinning disarmament and non-proliferation has eroded, and the multilateral disarmament machinery has been weakened. That opens the way for unilateral, discriminatory or coercive approaches.

The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) ended on what one may euphemistically call a strategic pause. Negotiations on the 2005 substantive outcome document broke down because of prevalent and divergent security interests. The erosion of consensus may create a vacuum that will be dangerous for peace and stability, especially in regions of tension. Nature abhors a vacuum.

In his address to the General Assembly on 14 September, President General Pervez Musharraf called for a new consensus to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation. I shall try to elaborate on that proposal in several brief points.

That consensus should be promoted through consultations and agreement among all Member States, not just among a self-selected — even if well-meaning — group of countries.

There should be equal security for all States on the basis of the fundamental premise in the Charter of the United Nations that security is the right of every State and the fact that the Declaration of the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2, section III) itself adopted the principle of equal security for all States.

Such security should be promoted multilaterally and not through national means or willing coalitions of groups, no matter how powerful.

We must address the underlying motives that drive States to acquire weapons of mass destruction, which include threats posed by superior conventional or non-conventional forces, the existence of disputes and conflicts with more powerful States and discrimination in the application of international norms and laws.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) multiplies the threat of the possible use of such weapons. Proliferation can be controlled only if

our efforts are accompanied by a parallel effort to realize WMD disarmament.

Discrimination and asymmetric possession of WMDs will not ensure non-proliferation or regional or global stability. Nor are technology constraints a durable answer, unless the motives for proliferation are addressed.

We must address the new threat of terrorists acquiring WMDs. Again, that can succeed only through collective and cooperative measures, not through coercion and discrimination.

A new security consensus should take into account the need to address existing and emerging global challenges to regional and international security. That goal can be achieved through the Conference on Disarmament or a special session of the Disarmament Commission.

With regard to a vehicle to develop the new consensus — or at least to begin to do so — we have proposed that the Chairperson of the First Committee could hold open-ended informal consultations. That could be a salutary build-up to the holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

I should now like to refer to the challenges that exist in the four core issues.

With regard to disarmament, I should like to underscore the slow pace of disarmament, and the credence and acknowledgement that should be given to the measures being undertaken and the continued commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under globally agreed conditions.

In the area of fissile material, the question we have to answer is whether a cut-off treaty will be verifiable or non-verifiable. That is where we are stuck at the moment, and that is what we must unstick.

We have to sort out the question of linkages between the four core issues. These linkages, in the context of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, are not artificial, contrived or extraneous. They are anchored in history and substance.

There is a need to reconcile nuclear reality within the global non-proliferation regime. That is, the existence of eight, not five, nuclear-weapon States.

With regard to the programme of work, the five ambassadors' proposal is good enough. It has distilled all the proposals on the table. Diplomacy is the art of the possible. These are the minimum credible desiderata which we have on the table. If we want to commence work, we can do so without preconditions.

There is nothing wrong with the existing machinery. It needs to be fully utilized for the specific role assigned to each of its constituents.

I close my remarks by reiterating our proposal that we ought to be working for a new synthesis, a new consensus. We should do so sincerely, earnestly and, I must say, effectively.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): Let me first join others in extending our deep condolences and sympathy with regard to the victims of the natural disasters in South Asia and Central America.

As we noted during our opening statement (see A/C.1/60/PV.2), the First Committee is meeting at a very troubled time for multilateral nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. In his statement to the General Assembly last month (see A/60/PV.18), Canada's Foreign Minister deplored the fact that the United Nations world summit outcome (resolution 60/1) did not contain a single paragraph on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Regret was also expressed regarding the failure of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to come to an agreement on a substantive outcome at the Review Conference in May. In both cases, the inability to reach a consensus stymied the attempts of the many to make progress in achieving long-standing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation goals.

Here in this forum of the First Committee, however, the large majority of States may demonstrate their commitment to the principles of the NPT without the limitations caused by the need for unanimity. While the membership of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has steadily grown to 176 signatories, and while its international monitoring system continues to be built up into a modern verification regime with global reach, the Treaty's legal entry into force remains frustratingly out of reach. At the fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT held last month, the ratifiers of the Treaty agreed on a Final Declaration that reiterated their continued support for the Treaty

and made recommendations on how to gain the ratifications of the remaining 11 annex 2 States.

We are pleased that the Final Declaration included the Canadian proposal that calls on States in a given region to consider ratifying the CTBT in a coordinated manner. In recent years, Canada noted in its deliberations with many non-ratifiers that regional security dynamics tend to be a strong impediment to ratification for some countries. Our proposal sought to address one of the most common objections to ratification by such States, in the light of those realities: "Why should I ratify when others in the region refuse to do so?" By agreeing to ratify simultaneously, both annex 2 and non-annex 2 States in a given region can help build security and confidence in regions that suffer all too often from insecurity and uncertainty.

While the CTBT is being implemented provisionally as it awaits entry into force, other disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms that would bolster the NPT regime, such as a fissile material cut-off treaty, remain to be negotiated. Turning off the tap of fissile material production for nuclear weapons is a pressing priority on which no forward movement has been registered at least since the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which called for completion of such a treaty within five years.

The Conference on Disarmament had been given a specific negotiating mandate by the 2000 Review Conference, which it has unfortunately failed to realize, due to continued gridlock over a programme of work. Canada has stated its willingness to be flexible on the precise mandate for negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty as part of a compromise package on a programme of work for the Conference. We continue to urge other Conference members to display equal flexibility in our collective efforts to break the deadlock that has persisted for far too long. The integrity and viability of the NPT depend on continuing strong momentum in nuclear weapons reductions. There can be no going back to the nuclear arms race of the twentieth century. Since the 1980s a number of nuclear-weapon States have made significant and welcome progress in reducing their nuclear arsenals.

All nuclear-weapon States have a responsibility to ensure that their actions and pronouncements continue to be compatible with a progressive and consistent movement towards nuclear disarmament. Doctrinal or policy references that give the impression that nuclear weapons are being accorded increased importance in respective security policies are anathema to disarmament efforts. We encourage all nuclear-weapon States to securely reduce and dismantle their nuclear weapons arsenals with a maximum degree of transparency. We continue to call on those outside the NPT to join this core Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

The integrity and viability of the NPT also depend on States parties fulfilling their non-proliferation commitments. The right of a State to develop fuel cycle technology must be considered in the context of its NPT nuclear non-proliferation obligations. Iran must satisfactorily address the case of its non-compliance, which has been documented by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Until all outstanding questions have been resolved, we believe Iran must maintain the suspension of all its uranium enrichment-related activities. The resumption of conversion is a breach of the Paris agreement with the three European Union countries and ignores successive IAEA resolutions. In view of the recent IAEA Board of Governors resolution finding Iran in non-compliance, Canada believes that the IAEA must report the issue to the Security Council at the earliest opportunity.

Canada welcomes the agreement reached at the six-party talks towards resolving nuclear proliferation concerns on the Korean peninsula. We urge all parties to follow through on their commitments without delay and to build upon this agreement at the next round of talks in order to ensure a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons once and for all.

Finally, Canada welcomes the recent announcement that the IAEA and its Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2005. A founding member of the IAEA, Canada is a major participant across the full spectrum of its activities and served this past year as Chair of its Board of Governors. A deserving recipient of that prestigious award, Mr. ElBaradei has demonstrated capable leadership on a host of difficult non-proliferation and disarmament issues of concern to Canada and the world, including North Korea, Iran, Iraq and the strengthening of nuclear safeguards agreements under the NPT. The Agency makes a major contribution to international peace and security through

its verification and safeguards activities, and Canada congratulates the Agency and Mr. ElBaradei on this historic occasion.

Mr. Costea (Romania): Allow me to join previous speakers in expressing condolences and sympathy with regard to the natural disasters in South Asia and in Guatemala. As a country that has been hit by six consecutive waves of floods within the past year alone, we know only too well what it means to live through such a disaster.

Our position on the topic under discussion today was fully reflected in the statement made earlier by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union. Consequently, I shall focus on several particular aspects.

Very often this year, in various settings — including last week during the general debate of the First Committee — we have heard bleak assessments of the current status of disarmament and non-proliferation, especially in the nuclear field. We fully share these concerns, which are caused by the repeated failures of the international community to take common, consensual action against the nexus of old and new threats to global peace and security. The seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Disarmament Commission, the world summit, the Conference on Disarmament — all of those represent missed opportunities to strengthen the multilateral norms and measures aimed at furthering nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

Romania joined the cross-regional initiative launched by Norway in an attempt to contribute concrete proposals on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for inclusion in the summit outcome document. We were and are encouraged by the support received, although it was not enough to bridge the still-too-divergent positions and priorities of the entire United Nations membership.

We are of the view that as we design new mechanisms to respond effectively to our century's challenges, the existing ones must also be reinforced. We believe that they are complementary, not competing. Therefore, Romania attaches particular importance to the Proliferation Security Initiative and to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), and we welcome the recent opening for signature of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

At the same time, we continue to devote attention to the implementation of obligations under the NPT and of the decisions adopted at the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences. We took note of last week's updates on Article VI implementation by the United States — which recently completed the deactivation of its entire force of Peacekeeper intercontinental ballistic missiles, in accordance with its obligations under the 2002 Moscow Treaty — and by the Russian Federation, which since 1991 has achieved a fivefold reduction in its aggregate nuclear weapon stockpiles and a fourfold reduction in the number of its non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Romania has always viewed nuclear disarmament from a pragmatic perspective, owing to the gradual nature of the process and to its numerous political and strategic implications, particularly at the global level. That is why, among several steps still to be taken to accomplish the non-proliferation and disarmament agenda, we consider the immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or for other nuclear explosive devices to be a matter of urgency. In the meantime, we urge all States, regardless of their status, to impose a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

We are pleased to note the high level of support — expressed this year at Geneva but also currently in the First Committee — for the commencement of negotiations on such a treaty at the Conference on Disarmament. In our opinion, that is an achievable and realistic goal for the next session of the Conference, especially at a time when it will be marking 10 years since the completion of its last negotiating session.

We look forward to an interactive and fruitful debate.

Mr. Muhumuza Laki (Uganda): As I am taking the floor for the first time, my delegation would like to avail itself of this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Committee. I want to assure you and your team of our support for successful deliberations on the matters at hand.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements made at earlier meetings by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Last year, many delegations, including my own, expressed regret at the continued lack of tangible progress in the area of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We had hoped that there would be positive movement and that we would be addressing other related issues to enhance the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation. Unfortunately, we seem to have gone back to the drawing board, with the important questions of the day still unanswered.

We call for the complete prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons, which today pose the greatest threat to international peace and security. We must act to see to it that such weapons should fall into the hands of terrorists. We believe that the only way to guarantee that terrorists will never gain possession of weapons of mass destruction is to ensure that such weapons do not exist in the first place.

Uganda deplores the dumping of hazardous wastes off the coast of Somalia and calls upon the culprits to clean up their mess. It is deplorable that those who would be counted upon for assistance are instead taking advantage of a distressing situation, in collusion with some warlords, to secure permission to dump these hazardous wastes. A toxic nuclear dump can very easily serve as an arsenal for terrorists in their quest for weapons of mass destruction. That threat is very real, considering that terrorist acts require small quantities that could be recycled very easily from toxic stockpiles.

Uganda is a strong proponent of multilateralism. As such, we cherish the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the appropriate forum for the discussion of disarmament issues. It is therefore deplorable that the Conference on Disarmament failed to agree on a programme of work as a valuable time was wasted on non-issues of form rather than addressing issues of substance.

The fact that the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) did not make any pronouncements on disarmament matters does not mean that those issues are resolved. My delegation regards this as a temporary setback from which we hope to rebound with renewed determination, because we are all too well aware of the relationship between disarmament and development. We look forward to the time when we can all be beneficiaries of the disarmament dividend.

Lastly, I should like to express our sympathy to the delegations of India, Pakistan and Guatemala on the catastrophic losses suffered as a result of earthquakes, flooding and landslides.

On a positive note, my delegation applauds the Nobel Committee for awarding this year's Nobel Peace Prize to the International Atomic Energy Agency, together with its Director General. That is an important achievement for the Agency as well as for Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei. Perhaps the best form of recognition for the IAEA and Mr. ElBaradei would be to ensure that the disarmament community fulfils one of its cardinal objectives: disarmament. When that is accomplished, we can say that the Nobel Laureates' efforts will have been appropriately rewarded.

Mr. MacLachlan (Australia): At the outset I would like to echo the sentiments of others and extend my delegation's sympathies to the delegations, the Governments and the peoples of India and Pakistan regarding the terrible events that occurred over the weekend.

Australia regrets the lack of a substantive outcome from the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), but we will continue to work to strengthen the NPT in the face of the challenges confronting that essential pillar of the global security architecture.

Much is made of the bargain between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States in the NPT. Australia has long supported practical efforts towards nuclear disarmament, and for that reason we welcome the unilateral and bilateral reductions of nuclear weapons undertaken by nuclear-weapon States. We encourage further efforts to be carried out in a transparent and progressive manner.

Another bargain central to the NPT is the commitment that non-nuclear-weapon States will not develop or acquire nuclear weapons. That bargain is exemplified in the obligations of non-proliferation, which are at the very heart of the Treaty. Sadly, some States appear to have forgotten those obligations and are thereby putting the whole nuclear non-proliferation regime at risk. The international community must

strengthen the framework that reinforces the non-proliferation obligations of the NPT. Australia supports universal application of the strengthened safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) embodied in the additional protocol. The combination of a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol is now established as the contemporary safeguard standard necessary to maintain the integrity of the IAEA safeguards system and the international community's faith in compliance with the NPT. Australia announced earlier this year that it intends to require adoption by States of additional protocols, together with comprehensive safeguard agreements, as a condition for supplying them with Australian uranium.

The risk of NPT parties misusing the Treaty's peaceful nuclear energy provisions in order to acquire the technical basis for a rapid breakout to nuclear weapons is a serious matter for the international community. We believe a new framework is needed to limit the spread of sensitive nuclear technology, while respecting the right of NPT parties to peaceful nuclear energy. Such a framework could include enhanced controls on supply of sensitive technology, strengthened verification and detection in States with such technologies, and internationally guaranteed measures to ensure reliable access to fuel for civil reactors by States that forgo enrichment and reprocessing.

Entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) would greatly enhance international security by inhibiting weapons development by potential new nuclear-weapon States, as well as making it more difficult for States with nuclear weapons to develop more sophisticated warheads. The recent conference of the CTBT parties confirmed the near-universal commitment to the CTBT and its objectives.

Australia continues to urge the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Such a treaty would advance nuclear disarmament by capping the amount of fissile material available for nuclear weapons use and would further strengthen the barriers to leakage of fissile material both to States and, potentially, to terrorists.

As long as terrorists and others remain determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction, the international community must remain vigilant against the threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons. Measures to strengthen the non-proliferation regime which benefit all States must not be held hostage to movement on other NPT issues, important as they may be. Moreover, it is impossible to conceive of a world free of nuclear weapons in the absence of complete and permanent assurances of non-proliferation.

The Chairman: I now invite Mr. Rogelio Pfirter, Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to make a statement.

Mr. Pfirter (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons): I join others in expressing my deepest sympathy regarding the victims of the natural disasters in Guatemala, Pakistan, India and Afghanistan.

It is a great pleasure for me to address this Committee once again to report on the progress and developments in the spheres of chemical disarmament and non-proliferation and international cooperation, and on the activities carried out in implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

I would like, first of all, to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the important position of Chairman. I am very grateful to you for giving me this opportunity to address the Committee. I would also like to express my thanks to the Secretary of the Committee, who facilitated all the arrangements.

The work of the First Committee has a close and long-standing connection to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Chemical Weapons Convention. My presence here today is a reflection of that relationship and the importance we attribute to this forum for our own work.

Since my last intervention, in 2004, the OPCW has registered significant progress on a number of fronts, and considerable momentum is being generated in the implementation of the Convention. However, huge tasks and challenges remain before us: to achieve universal adherence to the Convention, to meet the timelines for destruction it sets out, and to translate its operative provisions into an effective web of national law, implementing authorities and arrangements. Only after that is accomplished can the highest level of assurance to which the Convention aspires be achieved. For that reason, my main message today is to stay the

course and to encourage and sustain the important momentum already created for the immediate future and beyond. The widespread support we are receiving from our ever-expanding group of member States is vital in this endeavour.

Now for the good news: as of this month, the total number of States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention has increased to 174, confirming that the CWC continues to be a fast-growing disarmament treaty — perhaps the fastest in history.

I would like to offer a brief overview of current developments in the area of chemical disarmament and non-proliferation. The six chemical weapons possessor States continue to destroy their declared stockpiles, which originally exceeded 71,000 metric tons of chemical agents and nearly 9 million munitions and containers. Those chemical weapons stocks have been secured, and the destruction of more than 12,000 metric tons — or 17 per cent of the total agent stockpile — has been verified. Similarly, more than one quarter, or 2.3 million, of the declared munitions and containers have been verified as destroyed by OPCW inspection teams.

At the same time, it is evident that the lion's share of the task lies ahead. While most possessor States could complete their destruction campaigns by or before 2007 — or 10 years after the Convention's entry into force — major challenges remain. Of necessity, most of the efforts involved — in terms of destruction campaigns, resources, and inspection time — relate to the two largest stockpiles: in the Russian Federation and in the United States. I have visited destruction sites recently in both States.

In Russia, no less than six facilities are to become operational in the course of the next four years in addition to the destruction facility at Gorny, where 1,000 metric tons have been destroyed to date, with the remainder of those stocks stored there expected to be destroyed by the end of the year. A new facility is about to become operational, hopefully before the end of the year, in Kambarka, and others will follow. Maradykovsky will probably be operational in April next year. I have personally received formal assurances from the Russian Government of its firm determination to move ahead decisively to accelerate the pace of destruction and to meet its obligations on time. Foreign Minister Lavrov, and presidential delegate and Chairman of the Commission for Chemical Disarmament Kiriyenko, as well the officials in charge of the destruction programme proper have all been unanimous in their expressions of commitment and determination to meet the final destruction deadlines by 2012 at the latest. Those are welcome and encouraging signs, as the magnitude of the remaining stockpile of chemical agents in Russia is indeed impressive and the pace of destruction so far has not been nearly as sustained as would have been expected.

In the United States, seven destruction facilities are currently operational. With more than 52 per cent of the United States stockpile destroyed to date, it is clear that there is an unwavering commitment to this crucial disarmament effort. The unmistakable demonstration of political will to comply is of vital importance for the international credibility of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Convention, as members know, foresees April 2012 as the final deadline for the entire destruction effort.

As head of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, I continue to believe that the solemn commitments undertaken by all States parties to the Convention must and will be honoured, and I support Governments in their efforts to achieve that target, no matter how sceptical some may remain and how complex this may seem at this point in time.

In that connection, I wish to recognize very concretely and once again the enormous efforts undertaken by Russia in its destruction programme, as well as the great support Russia is receiving from the Group of Eight through the Global Partnership. I also wish to formally encourage donor countries to continue to engage and to cooperate with Russia in the process. It is a good investment not just for the sake of Russia's destruction programme, but also for the safety of all of Europe and the rest of the world.

In addition to the chemical weapons stockpiles, all of the 64 former chemical weapons production facilities declared by 12 States parties have been permanently inactivated. Eighty per cent of those facilities have already been certified by the OPCW as destroyed or converted to legitimate purposes, with the remainder of the facilities expected to be destroyed or converted by 2007.

Of note is the fact that Libya is now able to convert two of its former production facilities as a result of a change to the verification annex of the Convention approved by the States parties. The

that region. Further meetings have taken place and more will be held in the future.

Dialogue and the persistent promotion of the benefits that accrue to the countries of the region that join the Convention, as Libya has recently done, may well lead to conditions conducive to the achievement of universality without the need to wait indefinitely for the perfect conditions for signature of a comprehensive settlement.

As Director-General of the OPCW, I must warn against the risk of promoting that worthy objective at the cost of jeopardizing universal implementation of the Convention. Any compromise on the CWC, or an undefined delay when complete disarmament and clear conditions prevail, A chemical weapon has thereby not to belong to exclusive systems. Let us remember that we are talking about weapons of mass destruction that have been condemned and outlawed by the international community. No one can expect that by accepting a so-called chemical option open to not adhering to the Chemical Weapons Convention, chemical for peace will increase. Rather the contrary is true. Only then can any country expect recognition of legitimacy should it resort to the use or threat of use of chemical weapons. Indeed, the great majority of humankind is already party to the Convention. Those remaining outside it are ill-served by their attitude towards this important issue.

The Government of Iraq has indicated its intention to adhere to the Convention. That is another promising development, and I have pledged the OPCW's full support and readiness to assist the State in adhering to the Convention. We look forward to further cooperation with the Government of Iraq following an initial training course on the CWC for Iraqi officials conducted at The Hague in July. A follow-up meeting is now being prepared with the assistance of the Kingdom of Jordan to take place before the end of the year to continue preparations for a smooth reduction of Iraq into the OPCW and its verification regime.

The OPCW's commitment to Africa is unblemished. Indeed, it is maturing into a significant cooperative relationship, channelled through our own African member States in The Hague and through the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa. A handful of States remain outside the realm of the Convention. I have met with them over the past few weeks, in Africa and here today in New York. Prospects for their accession are indeed favourable, confirming Africa's long-standing support for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction from their continent and the rest of the world. I am grateful to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, President Konaré, expressed his most high support and commitment to the principles and the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as his desire to work together with the OPCW towards that goal.

The Technical Secretariat's capacity to offer and coordinate assistance in case of an emergency involving the use of chemical weapons demands utmost preparation. This week in Lviv, Ukraine, an important event is being held: the Joint Assistance Open Field exercise. Through that exercise, we aim to address the capacities of participating member States, international organizations including NATO and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to provide various aspects of emergency assistance in accordance with their mandates and coordinate their actions in a disaster-stricken area. The possibility of the release of toxic chemicals by terrorists has given rise to the increased interest by States parties to the Convention in implementation of article X of the Convention. The exercise focuses on a fictitious scenario and aims at enhancing the collective ability to respond to unforeseen events.

Further efforts are being made by the OPCW also to implement articles X and XI of the Convention, which relate to international cooperation and assistance and which are of particular interest to our many member States from developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition.

In the area of international cooperation, the OPCW continues to build the capacities of its member States to support implementation of the Convention and continues to promote the peaceful application of chemical and industry-related activities.

Most recently, we completed the second edition of the analytical skills development course for technical personnel and the sixth edition of the OPCW Associate Programme, with the participation of more than 100 experts from 71 member States with developing economies or economies in transition. It has been possible to conduct and expand such programmes and others that provide equipment

The Chairman: Mr. Pfirter's statement will be of service on Wednesday, when we discuss other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Al-Anbaki (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me on behalf of the Iraqi delegation to seize this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), at the thematic debate of the First Committee and to extend to him our profound thanks for the support and assistance he and his organization are providing to Iraq in preparation for Iraq's adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The OPCW has assisted Iraq in many ways to prepare for technicians who will undertake the work when Iraq accedes to the Convention, which we hope will be soon.

I should like to speak of a number of issues related to this matter. On 12 August 2004, the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs sent a letter to Director-General Pfirter, in which he underscored Iraq's upholding of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and recalled Iraq's intention to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention as soon as an Iraqi Government had been elected.

Iraq participated in the Second Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Asia, which was held in Beijing from 20 to 22 September 2004. My country also participated as an observer at the ninth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which was held in The Hague from 29 November to 3 December 2004. A delegation of Iraqi experts participated in a seminar held in Cyprus by the OPCW, in cooperation with the Government of Cyprus, from 13 to 15 June 2005. Moreover, Iraqi experts participated in a workshop held by the OPCW in The Hague from 6 to 8 July 2005, and preparations are being made to participate in a seminar that will be held in the Jordanian capital.

On this occasion, I wish to thank the Japanese Government, which has provided assistance and facilitated the participation of Iraqi experts. I thank the United States and United Kingdom Missions in The Hague, both of which provided assistance in this area. Also, I would like also to thank Mr. Ian Tudor for his work in the OPCW; he was central in facilitating the participation of Iraqi experts in these seminars. Here, I would like to emphasize that an ad hoc committee has

been established to give in-depth consideration to recommendations to Iraq's legislature concerning accession to the CWC.

The Chairman: We shall now turn to the introduction of draft resolutions. I give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Ms. Mtshali (South Africa): South Africa welcomes the opportunity to introduce the New Agenda Coalition's (NAC) draft resolution pertaining to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments". The draft resolution has already been submitted to the Secretariat and will be issued as document A/C.1/60/L.4.

I am taking the floor on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition partners, namely, Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden and my own country, South Africa.

In the New Agenda Coalition statement that was delivered during the general debate of this Committee on 3 October 2005, we expressed the view that the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime faces a significant challenge at the present time. We also stated that the NAC continues to believe that international peace and security remain threatened by the possibility that nuclear weapons could be used.

This year's NAC draft resolution coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and with the lack of any substantive outcome of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as with the inability of the recent General Assembly summit to reach agreement on matters relating to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. This is stated in the preambular paragraphs of our draft resolution.

Our draft resolution this year is again short, and it focuses on what we believe to be the essential elements required for maintaining further progress and momentum in the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation areas. As such, it explicitly recognizes and seeks to underline the importance of the NPT and its universality to achieving nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

The draft resolution seeks to convey a specific message about the importance of and the need for implementing commitments already made on nuclear disarmament, in particular those from the NPT Review Conferences of 1995 and 2000. It is therefore similar to, and builds on, the NAC resolution of 2004 (resolution 59/75), and presents an approach that emphasizes compliance with nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation commitments.

The draft resolution also reaffirms the NAC's belief that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes requiring urgent, irreversible progress on both fronts.

The partners of the New Agenda Coalition have endeavoured to consult widely on our draft resolution, both in Geneva and in New York. We appreciate the constructive comments received from delegations, including most of the nuclear-weapon States.

As the text of our draft resolution has already been shared with all delegations, I will not delve further into detail, except to say that, in our view, the text is drafted in a manner that should enable all States to support it, since it seeks to uphold previous commitments arrived at by consensus.

We therefore believe that it is important, in the light of current events, for all of us to show our consolidated support for nuclear disarmament.

The Chairman: There seem to be no further delegations wishing to introduce draft resolutions at this stage. Before adjourning the meeting, I give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mrs. Bonilla Galvão de Queiroz (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish, through you, Mr. Chairman, to express our appreciation for the warm solidarity conveyed to us by other delegations, both formally and informally, on the devastating storm that struck my country. I echo the thanks that my Permanent Representative expressed during this morning's General Assembly plenary meeting for the decisive backing the international community has accorded us.

Lastly, we cannot but express our condolences to our brothers and sisters in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.